



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

RECENT WORKS ON COMPARATIVE RELIGION

The Study of Religion. By STANLEY A. COOK, M.A. London :
ADAM and CHARLES BLACK, 1914. pp. xxiv + 439.

The Threshold of Religion. By R. R. MARETT, M.A., D.Sc.
New York : The MACMILLAN COMPANY, 1914. pp. xix + 223.

Theological Symbolics. By CHARLES AUGUSTUS BRIGGS, D.D.,
D.Litt. (*International Theological Library.*) New York :
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, 1914. pp. x + 429.

IT is easier to state what Dr. Cook's book is not than what it is. It is not a manual of, or a guide to, the study of comparative religion like, for instance, Jastrow's excellent book, bearing the same title as the present work, treating in a concrete manner of the manifestations and constituents of religion, of the elements underlying the religious sentiment, of the definitions and classifications of religions, &c. &c., with accompanying bibliographies. It may perhaps be described as a philosophical or psychological propaedeutics, containing at once a birds-eye view of the philosophy of history, of culture, of the development of the human mind and of the interaction of the many various factors in these spheres, with special application to the study of religions. The book is not easy reading ; it was apparently not written for tyros in mental work. The style is often abstract, and it is not always easy to follow the author in the development of his themes. But one who is in a measure inured to metaphysical thinking and language, and does not shirk reading and re-reading the book will reap a rich harvest of stimulating and suggestive thought. We would refer, among many others, to the disquisitions on the mental attitude of W. Robertson Smith (p. 65) ; human sacrifice (p. 198) ; significance of the Prophets of the Old Testament (p. 301) ; Babylonian influence on the Old Testament (p. 322). Altogether the book is pervaded by a lofty and reverent spirit, and gives the ripe thoughts and reflexions of a man who has long and deeply

brooded over the problems which he discusses, and to whom religion and the life of the soul are paramount realities.

The Threshold of Religion is the second edition of a reprint in book form of papers which have previously been published elsewhere. They are: (i) Pre-animistic religions; (ii) from spell to prayer; (iii) is taboo a negative magic? (iv) the conception of *mana*; (v) a sociological view of comparative religions; (vi) savage supreme beings and the bull-roarer; (vii) the birth of humility; (viii) in a prehistoric sanctuary. The three last essays appear for the first time in book form in this second edition. The bond of union between these essays is that they stop at the 'threshold of religion', that is, they treat of religious origins, the stuff of which 'rudimentary' religion is made, 'the vague shapes—phantoms teeming in the penumbra of the primitive mind and dancing about the darkling rim of the tribal fire-circle'. The main contention of Prof. Marett is that primitive man should not be burdened with clearly-defined ideas in his religious beliefs and practices; he 'danced' his religion rather than in any way thought it out coherently. 'Savage religion develops under conditions, psychological and social, which favour emotional and motor factors, whereas ideation remains relatively in abeyance.' The constituents of primitive man's religion is a sense of awe, fear, wonder, and the like the object of which is the supernatural, *i. e.* the supernormal. The reviewer knows of no book of like scope and compass that presents such a keen, searching, and penetrating psychological analysis of the workings of the primitive mind combined with a rational and reasonable synthesis of his mental attitude and outlook.

Symbolics is the comparative study and presentation of the doctrines and dogmas of the several divisions and denominations of the Christian Church at the hand of the officially formulated statements, such as the creeds, the decrees and canons of councils, the confessions of the various national churches or denominations. The present posthumously published work of Prof. Briggs is marked by the wide erudition, the painstaking and conscientious research and irenic spirit characteristic of the lamented Biblical scholar and theologian.

Mithraism. By W. J. PHYTHIAN-ADAMS, M.A. (Oxon). (*Religions Ancient and Modern.*) Chicago: THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING COMPANY. pp. xi + 95.

Mithraism has for the last quarter of a century or so, especially since the epoch-making investigations of the Belgian scholar, Franz Cumont, held the attention not only of students of comparative religion, but also of theologians. Among the many 'mystery' cults which about the beginning of the Christian era were rampant in the Roman Empire, that of Mithra was the most formidable antagonist and rival of Christianity. It offered itself as a religion of salvation and redemption with a saviour god for its centre, with a ritual suggesting striking resemblances with that of the Church, and a stern, virile moral code. The numerous bas-reliefs, remains of temples and inscriptions discovered of late attest to the wide spread of the cult over the domain of the ancient Roman empire, from the mouth of the Danube to the borders of the desert of the Sahara, from the shores of the Black Sea to the remote mountains of Scotland. Much in the doctrines of Mithraism, which seems to be a mixture of primitive Indo-Iranian myths and Babylonian traditions, as also of the symbolism of its ritual, is still obscure, owing to the paucity and fragmentariness of literary documents bearing on the subject. The little book before us is an excellent, well written and nicely gotten up *résumé* of the present state of knowledge of the origin, development, doctrines and practices, and history of the cult. It discusses the subjects under the following heads, preceded by a preface: (i) Mithras in Asia; (ii) Mithras in the Roman Empire; (iii) The followers of Mithras; (iv) The Monuments and Mythology of Mithraism; (v) The External of Mithraism; and (vi) The Message of Mithraism. The author traces the conception of Mithra and the myths woven around him to their Indo-Iranian sources (*Vedas* and *Avesta*), and he is also fully familiar with the modern literature on the subject. At the same time, he preserves his own independent judgement, which he advances with laudable caution and reserve, conscious that we are moving here on uncertain and

shifting ground. His final judgement on Mithraism as a religious system is: 'It fell at last not because it was entirely bad, but because it was so nearly good.' A brief select bibliography directs the reader to works which more fully treat of the cult, while the addition of a 'Mithraic Chronology' and four cuts of Mithraic reliefs will assist the reader in following the author in his concise narrative.

Allgemeine Religionsgeschichte. Von CONRAD VON ORELLI: Zweite Auflage in zwei Bänden, Ersten Bandes vierte-fünfte Lieferung; zweiten Bandes erste-fünfte Lieferung. (Bringing the work to a conclusion in two volumes. pp. viii + 420 and viii + 478.) Bonn: A. MARCUS UND E. WEBERS VERLAG, 1911-13.

The general arrangement of this work, as also the standpoint of the author and the tone and tenor of his discussion, have been noticed in a previous issue of this REVIEW, when the first three parts of the work were under consideration.¹ The remaining two parts of vol. I bring the discussion of the religions of the Semitic Family to a close. They open with the conclusion of the rapid sketch of the development of the religion of Israel, coming down to modern 'Zionism', which Orelli considers as a reaction against the amalgamation of the Jews with their surroundings (I, 297). In his analysis of Essenism (I, 293-5) the author would admit only an indirect influence of Parseeism on its doctrines and practices, but assumes with Zeller (*Philos. der Gr.*, 3rd ed., III, 2, p. 277 ff.) a kinship between it and Pythagoreism, and both were 'fertilized' by Mandaëism which, on its part, issued not from Parseeism but from the Aramaic-Assyrian religion. But aside from the fact that the existence and propagation westward of Mandaean ideas and usages before Christianity is not well established, judging by Orelli's own exposition of Mandaëism (I, 311-22) there is nothing either in the phantastic doctrines of the Mandaeans or in their manner of living to connect them with

¹ JQR., N.S., VI (July, 1915), pp. 191-3.

the Essenes. On the contrary, while, for instance, the Essenes faced the sun in prayer, the Mandaeans considered him, with the other planets, as a fiendish demon. The Essenes renounced marriage and slavery, and were given to ascetic practices generally, the Mandaeans considered marriage a duty, kept slaves, and despised celibates and ascetics.

Christianity is disposed of in less than two pages. Then follows the offshoots of Judaism and Christianity, viz. Manicheism (I, 299–311), Mandaism (I, 311–22), and Islam (I, 323–412), the latter beginning with the religion of the pre-Mohammedan Arabs, and closing with the latest outgrowth of Babism and Bahaism.

In delineating the religion of the pre-Mohammedan Arabia the author again asserts his main thesis that the worship of one heavenly God was primary, while astrolatry and veneration of stones were secondary, arising under the influence of mythology or local symbolism. In support of this view he refers to the fact that the generic conception of the deity under the name of Allah was current among the Arabs before Mohammed (I, 331). Mohammed and Mohammedanism are given a lengthy discussion, the author supporting his statements by copious quotations from the Koran and authoritative writers, native as well as foreign. Against Nöldeke and Houtsma Orelli denies Mohammed the character of a real, genuine prophet, and in the opinion of the writer justly so. Mohammed neither in originality of thought, nor in sweep of vision, nor in the ethical and spiritual standards of the life of individuals and nations attains in any measure to the height of the Prophets of the Old Testament. The title of prophet is generally too prodigally applied so as to empty it of its weighty and pregnant import. This is not to say that the author brands Mohammed as a schemer and deceiver from the start. On the contrary, as a proof of the sincerity of Mohammed and *bona fides* of his mission he adduces the fact that his first adherents were among his near kin. He concedes Mohammed personal greatness as a man, devotion, singleness of purpose and self-denial in fulfilling his mission. But his lapses in the later, Medina, period were not those of a 'fallen angel'. It is true that 'Mohammed's religious

character in the first [Meccan] period appears purer and more sympathetic than in the later' . . . but 'he had in Mecca no higher religion than later in Medina where his ideal, owing to circumstances, assumed a more realistic form. The prophetic office which he claimed lacked from the beginning the full inner truth, and his later development only brought out this want more clearly, showing itself most palpably in the fact that his intercourse with Allah exercised no real sanctifying influence upon himself' (I, 372). Orelli's estimate of Mohammedanism in its religious and moral aspect is a similar vein. It is, he says, a compromise between Biblical maxims and the traditions and customs of the country (I, 390). It lacks ethical depth. 'In the theological respect Islam is a relapse from Biblical monotheism into a certain naturism. . . . The relation of man to God is not a free mutual one, resting on holiness, but fatalistic and legalistic. The deity is here the pagan *fatum* in theomorphic conception' (I, 393).

Volume II is devoted to the religions of the Indo-European family—Vedas, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Parseeism, the religions of the Greeks, Romans, Celts, Germans, and Slavs, followed by the African, American, and Oceanic groups. There is little in the discussion of these religions that calls for comment. The author, in accordance with theory, finds everywhere, even among the Negroes of Africa and the Bushmen of Australia, reminiscences of the knowledge and conception of one invisible God of heaven.

At the close of the work the author expresses some general views on religion on the basis of his survey of the religions of the world. (i) The universality of religion among mankind in time and space demonstrates its primitiveness, at the same time proving the mental unity of mankind, and while it does not absolutely establish its historical unity it justifies it as an hypothesis. (ii) The earliest (not original) form of religion was neither an abstract or spiritual monotheism, nor any of the low forms (fetichism, animism, &c.), but a kind of henotheism. There is a general tendency to a unitary conception of the deity, and to connect his manifestations with the highest phenomenon perceived by the human eye—the

heaven, or the most striking appearance on its expanse—the sun. But either is, as a rule, distinguished from the deity himself, being considered as his embodiment or manifestation. But the deity is so closely related to the natural phenomenon that in the course it becomes finite and multiple. In the concluding chapter the author takes his stand against the theory of evolution as applied to the Biblical religions: there is no instance in history of the gradual rise of a religion from a low level to a higher.

Both volumes are provided with indexes of subjects, authors, and Biblical passages quoted in the work. To the corrigenda add: I, 291, n. 5, read 2 Kön. 21, 16 for 21, 26; II, 201, n. 2, read Wilamowitz for Milamowitz.

The work of Orelli, intended in the first place as a manual for theological students, gives one of the fullest and most detailed discussions of the subject. The style, marked by clearness and noble simplicity, is worthy of the great theme. The author lets the religions speak for themselves as much as possible. His explanations and interpretations are sympathetic, here and there not without a touch of poetic imagination. At the same time he does not idealize their contents or indulgently gloss over grave errors of beliefs and perversions in conduct, which in his view are correlated. He surveys the religions of the nations from the heights of Sinai and Zion and finds them frequently wanting or defective. His judgements are often frank and outspoken. But the tone is throughout lofty, grave, and calm, *sine ira et studio*.

I. M. CASANOWICZ.

United States National Museum.